

"I've been well guided and supported in my career choices to date, and the job I now do is one-of-a-kind."

Katie always knew she wanted to work with children, and volunteering with St John's Ambulance steered her towards nursing instead of teaching.

Katie Ryan

Practice educator

Employer or university

Great Ormond Street Hospital NHS Trust, London

Salary range

£30k-£40k

children's nurse

Getting into the role

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I chose the degree course to get the highest possible qualification from my three years of study.

Some people think degrees are only for 'academics', but it isn't true. Nurses need to be well balanced: able to think for themselves and also able to apply their knowledge in a practical way. The degree course is a great way to develop this balance, by combining hands-on experience with academic study.

Straight after qualifying I applied for a staff nurse position at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH). I progressed quickly through outpatients and inpatients, gaining a

broad set of clinical skills. Before long I was promoted to team leader, then into a training and education role.

What I do

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I've been well guided and supported in all my career choices, and the job I now do is one-of-a-kind. I support the 50 staff nurses on GOSH's rotational programme. These nurses do a six-month placement in each of three different units, which helps them to develop a range of transferable clinical skills and the flexibility to work anywhere.

My role includes recruiting and selecting staff nurses and supporting them throughout the programme. I've also set up an induction programme to orientate all new nurses.

I work a four-day week, 8am-6pm, split between office and clinical work. I handle placement scheduling, training, and deal with any performance or personal issues nurses may have. The rest of my time is spent observing nurses at patients' bedsides and signing off their practical skills.

This job allows me to work very independently. I like having the flexibility to plan my own diary and do my job to the best of my ability. The best part is seeing nervous, newly qualified nurses transform into confident, enthusiastic professionals.

Going further - next steps

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I completed my Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and I'm now rolling it into a Masters in Education. Shortly, I should have achieved one of my key goals: to become well qualified enough to access a wide range of senior teaching roles, or to work towards a specialist position in children's A&E.

Pay and benefits

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Compared to my peer group outside nursing, I feel pretty positive about my income. My nursing qualifications and experience mean I'm already in a good place on the pay scale (band 7), and the London weighting is a bonus.

No matter what my future life looks like, nursing means I'll be able to work in a job I enjoy and which fits around that life. I feel I've managed to create a fantastic platform for whatever comes next.

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